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IV.

COURAGE.

THAT element in our natures which enables us to face foes, to laugh at danger, to defy fate, is not always courage. Far from unfrequently, it is recklessness. Very often it is pride, or the love of praise, or the fear of scorn. When the latter is the case, cowardice is made to seem as courage. A certain philosopher said : " A truly brave man is often unconscious of having courage, and only discovers it when some emergency arises which calls it out "—certainly a logical deduction. If a man may possess genius unawares, why not a lesser attribute like courage ? Not that courage is insignificant, but because genius is the greatest and the rarest thing in the world.

There is a proneness to look only to openly demonstrated heroism for courage, and never to grant its existence elsewhere. Courage, however, is not essentially a matter of noise and bombast, but more often of the extremest quiet. The man, who, in the midst of poverty and privation, toils unflinchingly and uncomplainingly for the sustenance of his family, in full consciousness of the fact that he can never rise superior to his misfortunes, is a man of courage. The man who, intrusted with vast sums of gold, which he might, if he would, make his own, but who faithfully deals back to each creditor his due—he is a man of courage. The man who has views which are in advance of his age, and, with them, sufficient daring to coolly express and calmly discuss them—he, also, has courage ; but the bravest man of all—the one who has the best and most unimpeachable right and claim to courage, is the man, who, to shield and protect others, accepts open insult and submits uncomplainingly to open censure, criticism, and indignity. This is harder than heading an army, harder than wearing a royal crown, harder than preaching truth and right to a generation of fools. In all my life, I have known of but one such man ; and though I never have met him, I revere him as a god ; and yet, the world would question my sanity if I wrote his name, where it belongs, high up in the list of heroes.

GEORGE SAND.